33203 Grand River/Farmington, MI 48024 Robert Sklar editor/477-5450

Change charter

Don't penalize council hopefuls

WO YEARS ago, Farmington Hills voters said no to Proposition D, a charter amendment that would have let men-bers of city boards and commissions be-come council candidates without first having to

sign. We think the proposal should be returned to the

resign.

We think the proposal should be returned to the ballot because we're not sure the voters who said no fully understood it. We don't like the provision and urge that voters out it from the city charter. When he announced his council candidacy in 1985, Jonathan Grant stepped down from the library board. After he narrowly lost his had for a council seat, Grant was reappointed to the hibrary board on then-mayor Jan Dolan's recommendation.

Dolan is out of the country, and it's not clear why she waited until after the election to fill the vacant library board post. But we suspect it was because no other applicants emerged.

This year, council candidates Aldo Vagnozzi and Jean Fox had to resign from the library board and zoning board, respectively. Vagnozzi bedieves that if he fails to gain election to the city council, he should be reappointed to the library board, just as Grant was. board, just as Grant was.

THAT HOPE ended last week when the city council, on Mayor Ben Marks' recommendation, named Mary Kay Zolton to Vagnozzi's former library board seal.

In recommending Zolton, Marks said he was qualified applicants come forth.

"That charter is our law," the mayor said, "It is unfair to ask anybody who sits in this chair to give any special consideration to anybody who stunning for council —for whatever reason.

"I don't think that's fair I really dan't."

Meither do we.

Neither do we.
That's why the council, regardless of Dolan's reasons two years ago, had little choice this time around but to fill Vagnozz's former seat when Zolton, a well-qualified applicant, emerged.

We think the proposal should be returned to the ballot because we're not sure the voters who said no fully understood it. We don't like the provision and urge that voters oust it from the city charter.

And that's why we think the charter provision is bad. It's tough enough in this city finding qualified folks to serve on the 20 boards and commissions.

AS WE see it, the provision imposes an unfair penalty. Why should a hard-working hoard or commission member have to resign just because they care enough about the city's welfare to seek a seat on the city council?

We suspect the provision was included to prevent candidates from playing politics or having an unfair advantage. But with basically two months between the filing deadline and election day, it's unlikely any candidate would have enough time to parlay their appointed position into an elected scat.

We agree with Vagnozzi that the provision is

We agree with vagara-excessive and unnecessary. "What kind of message will this send to per-what kind of message will this send to per-sent the city and possibly "What kind of message will this send to persons interested in serving the city and possibly running for city council?" he asks. "I say it sends a very chilling message."
Well, maybe not "very chilling." But it does prompt second thoughts among potentially good candidates.
Next year, we'd urge the city to again place the charter provision on the ballot and publicize its merits and drawbacks.
We think a fully informed voter would recognize that no one should be penalized for running for city council.

for city council

DAMMIT! THIS STRIKE'S COSTING ME \$50,000° eth DONA A WEEK! 1

Don't rap Southfield; instead, learn from it

IF EVER there's a chance to be reasonably informed when you cast your ballot in a Farmington Hills City Council race, it's this year. Candidate nights, cathe TV broadcasts, newspaper stories, campaign hterature, political signs, even door-tuden stumping — all await voters before election day, Tuesday, Nov. 3.

So it's no wonder that even the most curious voter's thirst for informost curious voter's thirst for imor-mation should be quenched this year, despite the biggest field of candi-dates since 1979.

There's certainly no shortage of campaign themes — manufactured or otherwise.

or otherwise.

On Metrovision of Oakland County's "Viewpoint" cable-TV show Friday, the nine candidates unveiled a varied slate of themes: creeping commercialism, uncontrolled growth, inconsistent zoning, inadequate youth activities, crime con-cerns, road congestion, solid waste disposal, tired leadership.

At least two candidates even took swipes at our neighbor to the east, saying they'd hate for Farmington Hills to become another Southfield.

I'D HATE for Farmington Hills to FD HATE for Farmington Hist to mimic Southfield's penchant for high-rise office huldings. Farming-ton Hils' low-rise limits sun me just fine. I'd also like to see Southfield be more sensitive to how non-residen-nal development along the linkster Hoad corridor affects Farmington



Sklar

Itills.

But only the uninformed would rip Southheld as a city. Frankly, I'm ured of Farmington Hills folks thinking their city is better than our eastern neighbor.

L'itil moving to Farmington Hills thinking their city is better than our eastern neighbor.

L'itil moving to Farmington Hills this year. I called Southfield home for nearly 18 years. And I found it to be a super community—one of the most together around despite a changing face.

I watched it grow from just anothershubir to Oakland Gounty's nerve center. Though the Juster has dimmed, the city still has a lot to be proud of.

Its neighborhoods are integrated.

proud of.

Its neighborhoods are integrated, yet still peaceful. Its schools are integrated, yet still good.

DESPITE SERVING the county's most populated and most congested etc. Southfield's public and emergency services are still top-notch. The skyscraping heights of some aside. Southfield's office buildings

have helped keep residential tax rates low without compromising city services, just like in Farmington

The lots aren't as large, but many Southfield neighborhoods are just as appealing as many in Farmington Hills.

My old subdivision, one of South-field's oldest, was a microcosm of metro Detroit — blacks, Jews, Chal-deans, WASPs, Arabs, Indians, newlyweds, old timers.

I LIVED a stone's throw from one of Oakland County's most congested intersections, 13 Mile and Southfield Road.

intersections, 13 Mile and Southfield Road.

No matter.
The moment'I turned into my sub. I lost any sense of the nightmarish traffic.

It was a subdivision where side walks made it conducive to take nightly walks, to chat with neighbors and enjoy companionship. It was a subdivision where people mattered, not your living room furnishing. So as the Farmington Hills Clucumel race heats up., I'd urge the candidates to quit portraying Southield as a loset, to the Road last winter, and which was the leadings of the Road last winter, and which was the leading of the Road last winter, and which was the leading of the South Road last winter, and which was the leading of the Road last winter, and which was the leading of the Road last winter, and which was the leading of the Road last winter, and which was the leading of the Road last winter and which was the leading of the Road last winter and which was the leading of the Road last winter and last road last winter and last road last winter and last road last winter and which was the leading of the Road last winter and last road last winter and last road last winter and last road last winter and which was the leading of the Road last winter and last road last winter and last road last winter and last road last winter and which was the Road last winter and last road last winter and which was the Road last winter and last road last road

Competition

Free press key to free society

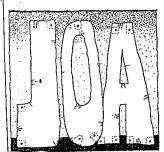
ATIONAL NEWSPAPER WEEK, Oct. 4

ATIONAL NEWSPAPER WEEK, Oct. 410. is particularly significant in the metropolitan Detroit area this year. That's because this time next year a donn Operating Agreement that would end their financial competition and cut costs by combining circulation, advertising and production operations. If granted by U.S. Attorney General Edwin Meese III, the JOA here in metropolitan Detroit would be the largest of 21 nationwide. Although the Detroit Free Press and Detroit News' editorial departments would remain separate, some functions would be combined, and they would publish combined editions on Saturdays and Sundays. It is hard to imagine that the competitive edge of two papers fighting for the same story wouldn't be duiled and, as a result, readers less informed.

IT'S PARTICULARLY galling that two of the nation's wealthiest publishing firms could spend wildy and then ask the government to reward them for their excess.

Newspapers in the suburbs, including the Observer & Eccentric, called for hearings on the JOA. Held in late summer, they contributed to the recent recommendation against a Detroit JOA by the antitrust division of the justice department. However, the decision, expected in about six months, is up to Attorney General Meese.

In the meantime, the suburban papers have taken steps of their own to mobilize against the prospect of a less vigorous press, a monopoly on advertising rates and added money to compete in



National Newspaper Week celebrates that strong, free press that is uniquely American, and which, when it does its job, helps insure a strong, free society.

the suburban market.

The Observer & Eccentric has joined with some other suburban papers to offer advertisers a mutual buy. And, on the editorial side, the Observer & Eccentric has developed new sections and directly competed with the dailies on stories of significance to the metropolitan area such as the crash of Northwest Flight 255 and Pope John Sent Life wis to Dotroil.

of significance to the metropolated and so conthe crash of Northwest Flight 255 and Pope John
Paul II's visit to Detroit.

In addition, suburban newspapers continue
their particular mission of providing hometown
news from the city commission and school board
meetings to the award winners and promotiongainers in your family.

Granted, a newspaper isn't the only way you
can get information. There is a lot of media
competition. But we've tried to make our pages
the best way for you to be informed.

You get lots of junk mail with advertising and
promotional lures, but junk mail doesn't give you
any news about your nation and community.
Planes fall, rivers are polluted, taxes are raised,
but junk mailers never tell you.

Your city hall and school board are on cable
TV with soft-soap informational programs. But
did you ever notice how they steer clear of the
thorny zoning, administrator salary and test
score controversies? The newspaper digs out

THE TV cameras were fast to the scene of the Flight 255 crash. But it was the newspaper that gave the blographies — despite resistance from the airline — of your neighbors and fellow residents who died or lost loved ones in that crash. Come to think of it, when anyone dies, it's the newspaper that carries the oblituary that you city. The broadcasters don't bother with that. It's all part of the vigorous American presspicture — and that picture includes more than 8,000 newspapers throughout the United States. National Newspaper Week celebrates the strong, free press that is uniquely American, and which, when it does its job, helps casure a strong, free society.

Tree society.

Any attempt to chip away at that press — particularly a step that requires government approval — weakens us all.

Farmington readers' forum

Letters must be signed, original copies and include the address and telephone number of the writer. None can be returned. Names will be withheld from publication only tor sufficient reason. Letters should be limited to 300 words in most cases. We reserve the right to edit them. Send letters to Readers' Forum, Farmington Observer, 33203 Grand River Ave., Farmington 48024.

Funeral facts are corrected

are corrected
To the editor:
Your article appearing in the Sept.
7 issue titled, "State Regulates Funeral Proplanning" contained several inaccuracies:
• The article states: "Until recently, funeral and cemetery directors handled such matters their own way, with their own rules and agreements. In July, however, the Michigan Legislature enacted a law that puts some uniformity into such procedures."

The law was actually enacted last December, becoming effective July 1. Prior to July 1, there was a 30-year-old law on the books governing preplanning of funerals. If anything, the old law provided less flexibility. Funeral directors were not permitted under the old law to "handle such matters in their own way, with their own rules..."
• The article states: "Under the

matters in their own way, with their own rules.

The article states: "Under the (new) law, all money prepaid for fueral and cemetery services must be placed in a federally insured, interest hearing escrow account until the funeral occurs."

This is only true in regard to non-

teed and non-guaranteed - the next treed and non-guaranteed – the max error appears: "If the guaranteed price contract is canceled by the consumer, the funeral director is en-titled to any surplus money in the ac-count after the consumer has been refunded the amount he put into es-erow."

nities to any surpuss nioney in the account after the consumer has been
refunded the amount he put into escrow."

This is false. Upon cancellation,
the funeral director is obligated to
refund a minimum of 30 percent of
the total amount of funds in the escrow account, both the original put
put and any carnings or "surplus."

"As under the guaranteed recontract, the funeral the secrow account under the non-guaranteed contraction of the secrow account under the non-guaranteed contraction of the secrow account under the non-guaranteed contraction of the secrow acsence of a non-guaranteed contract
is that while the family must make
up any deficiency, they are also entitled to a minimum of a 90 percent
refund of any surplus in the account.
In a guaranteed contract, no money
changes hands: the funeral director
may keep any surplus, but the family is never required to make up any
deficiency. The "agreement forms
from the state funeral director association" for non-guaranteed contracts clearly states on the front of
the form the following:
"Surplus funds in escrow account
If the principal and income in the escrow account at the time of the benefficiary's death exceed the price of
the goods and services customarily

This is only true in regard to nonguaranteed price contracts with respect to the federally insured account. And there is no requirement
that it be interest bearing, inthough
this is the normal practice.

• After discussing the two types
of prefunding contracts — guaran-

the time they are provided, a per-centage (must be at least 90 percent) of the surplus of principal and in-come in the escrow account shall be disbursed to the buyer or to the per-son designated by the buyer to receive such percentage. " Blehard J. Bryan, escentive director.

Burger King: It's defended

It's defended
To the cditor:
Here we go again! Residents at odds with Burger King (Oct. 1 issue). This story is getting old and should be put to bed once and for all.

Jappland Mr. Schonsheck and Mr. Williams for investing in our community the time and dollars needd to improve the Burger King in our town. Many times, the business owners are blamed for the actions of our community's youth.

I personally launched a dynamic, career, at that restaurant (on Grand River) in 1973 and as many responsible Parmington teens, I learned the responsibility of my first job through such businessmen.

I suggest the Begers family pediaton the parents of the affluent youth in our community to regulate the late-night actions. I commend this business for developing those that choose to carr money instead of depending on dad.

Frank Mighlore.

- Observer & Eccentric Newspapers

Steve Barnaby managing editor Rich Periberg assistant managing editor Dick Isham general manager Richard Brady director of advertising Fred Wright director of circulation

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